

La Jolla Parkway Ribbon Cutting Remarks

September 10, 2003

Thank you for coming today. It's an understatement to say that the completion of this project is an important event for La Jolla. All of us who drive through this intersection each day, lived through constant traffic back ups that made us late for dinner, late for a soccer practice, or late for reservations at George's, late for some other family gathering. We were discouraged by this intersection from leaving town; our friends (and customers) were discouraged from visiting. And every 6 months or so, the water main broke, and shut La Jolla down. So my number one infrastructure priority for La Jolla has been solving the problems at this intersection.

When we finished the roadwork early, in the last week of July, the intersection actually seemed to be working. The Mayor and I first thought about doing this groundbreaking before our August recess, but I just couldn't believe it would keep working. But now, after a month of operation, we are prepared to declare victory. You and I have been getting home more quickly lately and I am still getting calls from astonished La Jollans who got through the throat in one light cycle, or even sometimes without stopping at all. And things will be even better as the landscaping is installed over the next 2 months.

Many of you know of this intersection as the Throat, but few people, including me, knew the origin of this name. In the 1890's Anne Held created the legend of a Green Dragon that lived in the colony of cottages built above La Jolla Cove. The legend was created to inspire Bohemian

writers and artists to visit La Jolla to write and paint there. The Green Dragon was said to be the protector of La Jolla that watched over the community and kept it safe.

Well in 1996 the Dragon awoke and saw that the community was in need of help with the constant traffic backups entering the community. The dragon is said to have used his mythical power to inspire the community to come together to solve this problem and breathe new life into the village. Robert Thiele has explained that the spirit of the dragon is reflected in the consensus achieved in the community to clear the dragon's throat. Robert drew this drawing (reference drawing) as a representation of that spirit, and the story of the throat was born.

The completion of this project is a testament to how much can be accomplished in La Jolla when the community comes together for a common goal. In 1996, then Mayor Susan Golding created the Mayor's Traffic and Parking Task force to look at this and other traffic issues affecting La Jolla. One of the unanimous recommendations from this task force was to move forward with the reconfiguration of this intersection, something that previous Mayors and City Council representatives had specifically refused to do. That recommendation languished for two years, and one of my first acts as a member of the City Council was to meet with the engineering department and get the project moving.

This intersection is the second busiest in San Diego with over 70,000 average daily trips. This project is projected to reduce congestion by 50%, and having driven it before it was done, and since its completion, I believe it.

We also took this opportunity to replace vital water and sewer infrastructure that had not been replaced in over 80 years. In total, the City of San Diego has in this project invested \$9 million in the community of La Jolla.

There are many people to thank on this project so please bear with me. First and foremost, I'd like to begin by thanking the community for their patience and understanding during this project. I would especially like to thank the residents that had to endure the night work at the beginning of this project. I know it wasn't easy, but you can be assured that we won't be back for another 80 years.

I'd also like to thank the all of the City staff, and contractors who worked so hard to keep this project on track. Frank Belock, Patti Boekamp, Richard Leja, Mike Arnold, Sivash Pazargadi (the Throat Doctor), Hossein Ruhi, April Penner (now doing great work in park development), George Qsar, Lisa Adams, Kevin Estrada, Brian Bartow, Ha Nguyen, West Coast General Corporation, David Davey, Bob Garcia, Dick Gutowski, Gregory Mathews, TC Construction, Gene Brokaw, Terry Cameron, Wes Wise, Greg Gibbs, Telliard Construction, Dave Telliard, Torrey Pines Tree Relocation, Lintvedt McColl & Associates, Patricia McColl, Domenic Lupo, Bill Darnell and Darnell & Associates, Collaborative Services, Catherine Smith, Destree Lazo, KTUA Landscaping Design, Cheri Blatner. Thank You.

Finally, I would also like to give special thanks to our community leaders. My thanks to the La Jolla Shores Association, the La Jolla Town Council, Promote La Jolla and the Community Planning Association, who stuck with the project despite invitations to abandon it. And overdue thanks to those

who came together as part of the La Jolla Traffic and Parking task Force in 1996 to work on this project. As I call your name, if you could please step forward and receive a small thank you gift from the Mayor. Please stay up here after receiving your gift. Robert Thiele, Chuck Berke, Marty McGee, George Hauer, Mark Oliver, Ron Zappardino, Peter Wagener, Jim Alcorn, Courtney Coyle, Claude Anthony Morengo, Orrin Gabsch, Mark Lyon, Bill Price, and Martin Mosier. Also from the Town Council Sherri Leitner, Deborah Marengo with Promote La Jolla, and Susan Gouljian with the Shores Association.